



Testimony
Leo Paul
First Selectman, Town of Litchfield
Before the Finance Committee
April 6, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB-7036, **An Act Concerning Bonding for Regional Dog Pounds**, which will help communities in our region establish and maintain a regional animal control facility.

Litchfield is a member of the Northwest Hills Council of Government (NHCOC). There is considerable interest among the NHCOC member towns in developing a more effective and efficient animal control program to serve the regional area. In fact, the recently completed "Regional Animal Shelter Feasibility Analysis", prepared by a consultant in 2013, concludes that a "regional approach to a shelter in the region is feasible and desirable".

A variety of municipal arrangements have been established for providing animal control services in the region. Unfortunately, the quality and dependability of these services has been less than desirable in many instances.

Of particular concern is the antiquated animal shelter in the City of Torrington that is more than 50 years old and in critical need of replacement. An August 2014 inspection of the Torrington animal shelter by the State Animal Control officer resulted in the issuance of a "warning notice" for multiple code violations. Violations were cited for physical requirements, flooring, outdoor runs, indoor pens, sanitation, and isolation areas. The warning notice stated that failure to make corrections could subject the community to fines, suspension or revocation of their license, or closing of the facility. Demolishing this antiquated facility and replacing it with a modern facility to serve the regional area is being proposed in order to establish a more consistent and reliable program of animal control.

In addition to providing a more efficient animal control program, this program could help fund a more superior facility to those currently available in the region. This will mean a healthier and more comfortable environment for the sheltered animals and is expected to result in a higher level of adoption of abandoned animals.

All eleven towns in the former Litchfield Hills Planning Region, with a total population of 83,174, will participate in this project and be eligible to utilize the proposed regional facility. The remaining ten towns in the new Northwest Hills Planning Region will also be eligible to participate in the future, if desired. The project will, in addition to providing a modern facility, improve animal control officer services at a cost less than being expended at the present time.

I urge your support for this bill, which will help our region provide better animal shelter services in a cost-effective manner.